

## Cost of Living 15 Per Cent.

General Rise in Prices of Necessaries Controlled by Monopolies Adds to Burdens of Family Support—No Real Cause for Advance.

The necessities of life are on an average, 15 per cent higher than a year ago. The wage earner who supported his family on \$1000 last year must now pay \$1150 for the same necessities and commodities.

The supply of raw materials of all kinds was never larger. The cost of manufactured products is not higher than in any previous years. The manipulation of these commodities would cause a decrease in price if it were not for the increase upon the necessities of life.

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print-cloth industry, however, in connection with the trust most immediately concerned, have caused the prices to go up. Nearly all articles handled by a hardware store, a general store, or a department store, are sold at a profit of 15 per cent. The stock of a large establishment represents perhaps twenty different industrial combinations.

A majority of these trusts are dependent for their raw material upon the iron, steel, copper and brass trusts, and as each of the latter has increased its prices heavily within the past eight or ten months, the manufacturing trusts, following in the wake of the others, have also made an increase.

Retailers, when forced to pay more to the manufacturer or producer, invariably make additional provision for themselves when fixing a new scale of prices. The result is that for various articles of hardware the purchaser is paying anywhere from 10 to 100 per cent more than twelve months ago.

For stoves and kitchen utensils generally the increase varies between 35 and 50 per cent, but for different tools and hardware the increase is much higher. The average increase to the consumer is in the neighborhood of 40 per cent.

Since the organization of the Amalgamated Copper Company in April last with a capital of \$75,000,000, and the stability of an ultimate increase of \$100,000,000, the price of copper has been raised repeatedly.

Copper today is so costly through the operations of the trust that various concerns have found it profitable to buy and import Chinese copper coins and use them for manufacturing purposes. They can obtain the raw material at a much lower price than by dealing with the trust.

The coal trust is one of the few monopolies whose owners have failed to declare their goods combinations were for the public good.

The trust practically owns the whole of the anthracite coal region and fixes the price at whatever it sees fit. A month ago it ordered an increase of 25 cents a ton and Saturday at Pittsburgh an additional advance was announced of 5 cents a ton on lump coal and of from 5 to 15 cents on slack.

Confederate? And believing it would, he and I and thousands of others, who think of the honor of our countrymen, and the glorious record for virtue, patriotism and valor that the paltry dollar or temporary relief to the unfortunate remnant of them; oppose the pension law passed by the late legislature.

That our views are correct, see the results. Over 3000 applications have been already filed for pensions who must only have sworn they are paupers, but that they are physically unable to earn a bare support, and they must also have sworn they were ex-Confederate soldiers and the widows of such soldiers, who were married prior to March, 1865, and have never married since.

Show me the brave, true and determined Confederate soldier with a reasonable amount of principle, sense and self-respect, and I will show you a man true to the memory of the country and her glorious cause for which he pledged, in the dark days of war and disaster, "his life, his fortune and his sacred honor," and did most gallantly keep his sacred pledge, and he is the good citizen now, as patriotic as then, but never ready or willing to bow or bend or play the sycophant for the purpose of courting the favor "of our late adversaries" because a few of them, having drifted down to Texas in ruin, their financial standing, voted for the constitutional amendment, permitting the legislature of Texas to pass a law to put worthy Confederate soldiers on the pauper list and to allow the unworthy to put themselves there.

In my opinion Judge Burke echoed the true sentiments of a great majority of Confederate veterans, and the attempted criticism, being no honor to R. E. Lee, and to the memory of the Confederate soldiers, should be repudiated at once.

The act in question should have been entitled, "an act to enable certain poor old men to get a very small additional allowance from the State to that which the present law permits the county commissioners courts to allow its paupers and to call them Confederate pensioners." Respectfully, etc., Geo. McCormick, Commander, Shropshire-Pt. Camp No. 112, United Confederate Veterans, and late first sergeant company D, cavalry battalion, Waul's Texas Legion, McCulloch's brigade, Chalmers' division, Army of Forces of the Confederate States.

Proposes a Wheel Tax. To the Editor of The Post. Houston, Texas, August 11.—That every city must have paved streets and must keep them clean in this modern age is a proposition that no intelligent person will contradict. The taxpayers who are owners largely of real estate pay nearly all the cost of paving the streets, such being the case it is not fair and reasonable that these persons who use the streets and create the dirt and filth should contribute something directly to pay the cost of removing it.

We think every owner of a vehicle of any kind should pay a wheel tax to the city and thus create a fund to help pay the cost of street cleaning. A wheel tax to raise money for such a purpose is more just and reasonable than the tax levied on occupations, for obvious reasons. "He who dances should not object to helping to pay the cost of the music."

Some of our cities have levied a tax on the horse and carriage, and it is as wise measure. It is a subject worthy the consideration of our city fathers. Municipal taxation is a serious problem and should be wisely considered by those who are directly interested. Every effort should be made to distribute the burden equally among all the people and to keep down the tax rate. As we now have it real estate carries the large share of the load—in fact, nearly all of it—and the high assessments fixed in this year the danger line is being approached. The policy of assessing property for taxation at its supposed value or very close to it is unwise and is liable to increase rather than decrease values and thus "kill the goose."

The city, like an individual, should live within its means and get full value for every dollar it spends. Keep up with the times. Extend the city limits and gradually grow and increase in size, and by keeping down the tax rate and encouraging investments of capital within the city.

## THE EXPOSITION AT PARIS.

Paris, August 2.—(Special Correspondence of The Post).—The great exposition that is to be opened in Paris on April 15, 1900, will unquestionably in many respects surpass all its predecessors. It is true that in area it will be less than the Chicago exposition, but when we remember that Chicago had almost unlimited space to draw upon, while Paris is confined within walled limits, the wonder is that the management of this new enterprise has been able to do so much.

Another fact that must be taken into consideration is that while the Chicago exposition was a complete display of scientific and industrial perfection of its time as the Philadelphia centennial was of its own day the world is now several years older, and achievements that were then the most various of possibilities, confined in the minds of inventive dreamers, are now accomplished facts, while other industries that were then only slight consequences to attract notice, are passing attention have forced their way into prominence and have become of gigantic power in the world.

There is the submarine boat, the automobile, the X-ray, the cinematograph, not to mention the countless scientific achievements, and all of these will tend to make the Paris exposition the greatest fair that the world has ever witnessed.

To prepare for such a gigantic enterprise, however, was no small task, and it speaks volumes for the brains behind the work that things have already progressed so favorably that the management has been able to announce that there is no reason to believe that the date of the opening will have to be postponed.

Heretofore the exposition ground has looked more like an architectural enigma than anything else, but at last the veil has been lifted and the visitor can begin to catch glimpses of possible results from the piles of masonry and the half-completed structures of mere frameworks of iron, steel and wood.

Already the Grand Palais and the Petit Palais are nearly completed and from the appearance of these and the indications of grace and beauty that already distinguish other structures, it is a simple matter to decide that Paris will not disappoint the world.

The White City was larger, but in her six acres Paris will concentrate all the attractive features that can be conceived in the brains of the thousands of artists who are striving to make this event the greatest finale to the great century.

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## ANOTHER "OLDEST TEXAS MASON."



MAJOR W. M. PHILLIPS.

Smiley, Texas, August 12.—Major W. M. Phillips, the subject of this sketch, was born in Caroline county, Virginia, in 1814. He emigrated to Sabine county, Texas, in 1839, and came to Gonzales county in 1842, where he has since resided. He served the republic of Texas as a ranger under Captain Hays and the Confederacy as a member of Wall's Legion.

He became a member of Gonzales lodge No. 30, F. A. M., early in the forties, and the chapter in 1849. He is an Odd Fellow of thirty-five years standing and a member of the Methodist Episcopal church for twenty-seven years. His early life was spent as a farmer, but later as a merchant, in which vocation he is still engaged. He has been a resident of Smiley for sixteen years, and is highly esteemed by all his neighbors. He is well known in San Antonio, to which place he makes a trip every few months in the interest of his business.

He and his wife have been married for over thirty years. He has four children, three sons and one daughter. He is a man of high character and is well known in the community. He is a member of the Grand Lodge of the State of Texas.

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## HOUSTON POST LETTER BOX.

(This department is intended to answer questions that are of general interest. The main object is to supply out-of-the-way facts and curious information. Questions of personal interest only will not be answered. No business or personal addresses will be given. All correspondence should be addressed to The Letter Box, care Houston Post. Owing to the large number of questions received, answers can not always be given promptly.)

What are the superstitions concerning the diamond, opal, ruby and onyx? C.A.F. The diamond is said to produce somnambulism and spiritual ecstasy, and is the emblem of innocence. The opal is the emblem of hope, and is supposed to be fatal to love, as given as an engagement ring will bring bad luck. According to Burmese superstition, rubies in the original state are colorless, and the red hue is the development of time, the gem ripening like a fruit. It changes first to yellow, then to green, then to blue and finally to red. There is a superstition that the opal contains an imprisoned soul, which wakes at sunset and breathes bad dreams to the wearer. It is the emblem of conjugal love, and in Christian art is the symbol of sincerity. There is an ancient legend that Cupid cut the nails of Venus with the sharp point of his arrows, and as the parings sank to the bottom of the Indus river, they were transformed into onyxes.

1. What is the apollonian bill, and what caused it? 2. Why did the French withdraw their army from Mexico, leaving Maximilian without support? 3. The apollonian bill is a United States statute of 1885, providing for the ascertainment of the French apollonian claims. These were the claims of citizens of the United States against France for illegal captures, etc., prior to the treaty of 1800-61 between the United States and France. By this treaty these claims were assumed by the United States. The first appropriation for their payment was made in 1891. 2. Because of the dissatisfaction of the United States with European encroachments upon the American continent, and of the more determined attitude of this government after the close of the civil war, as well as of public opinion in France and the increasing complications of Napoleon III at home and abroad.

How many patents are issued each year by the country, and under what branch of the government? W.W. The commissioner of patents, who is under the direction of the secretary of the interior, reports that for the past ten years the applications for patents, including releases, designs, trade marks, and inventions, have averaged over 40,000 annually. For the year ending June 30, 1889, the report is: Applications for letters patent..... 25,582 Applications for design patents..... 2,232 Applications for release patents..... 91 Applications for registration of trade marks..... 1,861 Applications for registration of designs..... 112 Applications for registration of inventions..... 1,610 Total..... 41,880

Please give an account, if possible, of the origin of the custom of clinking glasses in toasting health. The only explanation we have ever heard was the following, given in the Notes and Queries of New York, published in 1859: "When Prince Charles passed over into France, after the failure of the expedition in 1715, his supporters were beset with spies on every hand. It so happened that occasionally in society they were requested to drink the king's health, but it was tacitly understood that 'the king' was not King George, but 'the king over the water.' To express this symbolically, one glass was passed over another and later down, the foot of one glass was touched against the rim of another."

What is meant by the expression, "Ruydaal the alchemist"? The alchemist refers to the characteristics of Ruydaal pictures. He was the most celebrated of the Dutch landscape painters of the seventeenth century. His favorite subjects are simple woodland scenes. He frequently paints coast scenes, and sea pieces with breaking waves and stormy skies; but is at his best in his rendering of lonely forest glades. The art of Ruydaal, which shows little of the scientific and poetic knowledge of later painters, is sensitive and poetic in sentiment and skillful in technique. In his love of landscape for itself, in his delight in the quiet and solitude of nature, the painter is thoroughly modern in feeling.

What nation owns the principal part of the world's shipping? F.R.B. No one nation owns it. Lloyd's Register of Shipping, just issued, shows that England owns 38 per cent of the entire merchant ships of the world. The United States come next, with 30.10 vessels, sail and steam, and between the two nations only about 30 per cent of the world's merchant tonnage is controlled, many opinions to the contrary notwithstanding.

I have either heard or read that the story of the great Powhatan and Pocahontas is only traditional, or is not quite true. If that is the case, why does the history mention it as a fact? I.B. The romantic story of Powhatan and Pocahontas is generally conceded to have been based on fact. The tendency of modern writers to destroy all these bits of romance in history is being carried entirely too far. They even go so far now as to contend that the Pilgrim Father's didn't land at Plymouth Rock, and that George Washington didn't cut his father's cherry tree.

Is the following true: "Between the ticks of a watch a ray of light would move eight times around the earth?" R.E.A. Light has a velocity of 186,000 miles a second. Estimating the tick of a watch as having a duration of one second, and the circumference of the earth as 25,000 miles, the expression you make use of is literally true.